**Drugs and Behavior**

**3Types**

**Depressants**

Depressants are drugs that slow down the functions of the central nervous system. Depressant drugs do not necessarily make a person feel depressed. Negative side effects include: constricted pupils, shallow breathing, clammy skin.

* Alcohol
* Cannabis ("pot")
* Barbiturates - still used in general anesthesia, as well as for epilepsy - still widely used in surgical anesthesia, especially to induce anesthesia
* Benzodiazepines - treatment of anxiety, for alcohol detoxification and useful for short-term treatment of insomnia
* Opiates and opioids, including heroin , morphine, codeine, oxycodone, hydrocodone - The analgesic (painkiller) effects of opioids are due to decreased perception of pain, decreased reaction to pain as well as increased pain tolerance.
* Some solvents and inhalants

In small quantities, depressants can cause the user to feel more relaxed and less inhibited. In larger quantities they can cause unconsciousness, vomiting and even death. Depressants affect concentration and coordination.

**Stimulants**

Stimulants act on the central nervous system to speed up the messages to and from the brain. They can make the user feel more awake, alert or confident. Stimulants increase heart rate, body temperature and blood pressure. Other effects include reduced appetite, dilated pupils, talkativeness, agitation and sleep disturbance. Mild stimulants include:

* Ephedrine used in medicines for bronchitis, hay fever and asthma
* Caffeine in coffee, tea and cola drinks
* Nicotine in tobacco.

Stronger stimulants include:

* Amphetamines, ("speed", "crystal meth")
* Cocaine
* Ecstasy

Large quantities of stimulants can "over-stimulate" the user, causing anxiety, panic, seizures, headaches, stomach cramps, aggression and paranoia.

**Hallucinogens**

Hallucinogens affect perception. People who have taken them may believe they see or hear things that aren't really there, or what they see may be distorted in some way. The effects of hallucinogens vary a great deal, so it is impossible to predict how they will affect a particular person at a particular time.

Hallucinogens include:

* LSD
* Magic mushrooms
* Mescaline (peyote cactus)
* PCP ('angel dust')
* Cannabis is a hallucinogen as well as a depressant. Ecstasy can also have hallucinogenic qualities.

Some effects of hallucinogens include dilation of pupils, loss of appetite, increased activity, talking or laughing, emotional and psychological euphoria and wellbeing, jaw clenching, sweating, panic, paranoia, loss of contact with reality, irrational or bizarre behavior, stomach cramps and nausea.